

**APPLICATION**  
**FOR**  
**UNITED STATES LETTERS PATENT**

**Title:                   GARMENT**  
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**SPECIFICATION**

## **GARMENT**

The present application claims the filing benefit of pending U.S. Provisional Application Serial No. 60/474,170 filed May 29, 2003, the disclosure of which is hereby incorporated by reference in its entirety.

## **Background of the Invention**

### **5 Field of the Invention**

The present invention generally relates to garments and, more particularly, to a garment for wear by one or more persons.

## **Description of the Prior Art**

Garments are designed and produced in a multitude of designs,  
10 colors, and fabrics. More particularly, garments are made for one or more general or specific purposes, while also attempting to appease the general public in cost, quality, durability, and overall appearance. For example, garments designed for winter may include more expensive fabrics, such as wool or fur, for extra warmth and may have decorative linings, stitching, and  
15 other refined touches for appearance and utility. Similarly, garments designed for use in warm weather, such as during summer, typically include less, but stylish, fabric that is adapted to breathe, feel comfortable, and be amenable for use in summertime or warm weather activities.

Regardless of the context of use, these garments are generally manufactured based on specific differences in people, such as different heights, waists, chests, hips, lengths of the arms and legs, breadth of the shoulders, neck size, and other body contours, etc. just to name a few.

- 5 Garments are also generally designed to attract specific economic classes, and to be sold in certain types of stores. Whatever the color, fit, fabric, and cost, there will always be a need to produce affordable garments having multiple uses, available in different colors and sizes, and having a generally acceptable appearance, thereby rendering the garment appealing to the public.

10 **Summary of the Invention**

- The present invention overcomes the foregoing and other shortcomings and drawbacks of the garment heretofore known. While the invention will be described in connection with certain embodiments, it will be understood that the invention is not limited to these embodiments. On the  
15 contrary, the invention includes all alternatives, modifications and equivalents as may be included within the spirit and scope of the present invention.

- The present invention provides garments that may be worn singly by one person or in multiple by many persons, while providing many benefits to the wearer(s). The garment is simple, comfortable, convenient to wear, and  
20 relatively inexpensive to produce. The garment also provides warmth, promotes personal closeness, friendship, and/or a feeling of comradery, and provides a source of personal or public advertisement.

- The garment generally comprises a panel of fabric having a first half, a second half, and a central opening therebetween. The panel may be of  
25 any desired shape and cut and of any material including, without limitation,

cotton, polyester, rayon, linen, nylon, wool, silk, rubber, and combinations thereof. Each of the first and second halves generally include a pair of opposing longitudinal edges, a common transverse foldline proximate the central opening, and first and second edges opposing the common foldline.

- 5 The panel includes at least one cooperating fastener positioned on at least one of the first and second halves for securing the first and second halves of the panel together. In one embodiment, the fastener comprising a male component and a female component, wherein the male and female components are adapted to attach to one another. Accordingly, the fastener
- 10 may be, for example, a hook, a button, a Velcro tab, a snap, a zipper, and the like or combinations thereof, so long as the fastening structure includes two complimentary components capable of interconnecting for secure attachment to one another.

- The male component may be positioned on the first half of the
- 15 panel and the female component may be positioned on the second half such that upon attachment, the first and second halves of the panel are connected or fastened together. In one embodiment, the fasteners are positioned along the longitudinal edges of the first and second halves of the panel. Thus, a single person can wear the garment by slipping their head through the central opening
- 20 such that the garment rests on their shoulders, and fastening the first and second halves together to effectively enclose the wearer's torso underneath the garment. The first half generally covers the person's front side while the second half generally covers their backside. In another embodiment, additional fasteners are positioned along the edges of the first and second halves

opposing the foldline (bottom edges) such that the garment may also be attached close to the wearer's legs or feet.

The garment may further include many desirable features or modifications. For example, in one embodiment, strips of fasteners comprise portions of the longitudinal edges without running all the way up to the foldline. This remaining gap, proximate the foldline, accommodates the wearer's arms when the garment is worn. In another embodiment, the garment includes a pair of second openings in at least one of the first half and the second half of the panel and proximate the wearer's waistline. In this way, the wearer can pass a belt or other structure through these openings as desired to further secure the garment to the wearer's body. The central opening, which generally contacts the neck and/or shoulders when worn, may be lined with desirable, comfortable and/or protective materials, such as fur or other soft materials. In addition, the visible areas of the first half and/or the second half may be imaged with the wearer's favorite pictures, icons, slogans, or phrases for personal satisfaction, and/or with advertisements for the general public to view.

In one aspect of the invention, two or more persons may be "doubled-up" or "huddled-up" together under two or more garments. Independent garments may be worn by adjacent individuals and interconnected via their fasteners. Adjacent people may wear the garments in reverse direction such that the cooperating fastener components may be fastened together. This "huddled-up" feature provides many benefits, as described above. For example, this feature is useful at a ball game or other event where many people are gathered and situated close to one another.

### **Brief Description of the Drawings**

The accompanying drawings, which are incorporated in and constitute a part of this specification, illustrate embodiments of the invention and, together with a general description of the invention given above, and the  
5 detailed description of the embodiments given below, serve to explain the principles of the invention.

Fig. 1 is a plan view of one side of a garment according to an exemplary embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 2 is a plan view of an individual wearing the garment  
10 illustrated in Fig. 1;

Fig. 3 is plan view of two garments to be connected together in accordance with the principles of the present invention; and

Fig. 4 is a view of a four individuals wearing four garments connected together in accordance with the principles of the present invention.

### **Detailed Description of the Drawings**

With reference to Fig. 1, there is shown one side of an exemplary garment according to the principles of the present invention. As shown, garment (10) includes a panel (12) of fabric of a desired shape or cut. Panel (12), as shown; is generally rectangular in shape and includes a first half (14)  
20 and a second half (16) which are integrally connected along a common transverse foldline (18). Each of first half (14) and second half (16) also includes opposite transverse edges (20) and (22), respectively, which extend parallel to foldline (18). Similarly, each of first half (14) and second half (16) has a pair of opposing longitudinal edges (24) and (26), respectively, which  
25 extend transverse to the edges (20) and (22). While panel (12) is illustrated as

rectangular, the invention is not so limited, and panel (12) may be of varied shape as desired, such as square, circle or oval, provided it generally has a first half (14) and a second half (16) joined via a foldline (18). In addition, panel (12) need not comprise a single piece of fabric as shown. Rather, panel (12) may  
5 comprise two panel halves. For example, the first half and the second half of panel (12) may be individual pieces of fabric, and joined together to form a foldline (18).

In the embodiment illustrated in Fig. 1, panel (12) has a total length of about 90 inches and width of about 60 inches, i.e., each transverse  
10 edge (20) and (22), independently, is about 60 inches wide. As shown, the longitudinal edges (24) and (26) are approximately equal in length and the first and second halves (14) and (16) of panel (12) are approximately equal in dimension. A slit or an opening (28) of a desired size and configuration is provided generally central to foldline (18). Opening (28) is configured with a  
15 sufficient shape to allow a wearer's head 29 (Fig.2) to pass through opening (28), thereby allowing the garment to rest on the wearer's shoulders and drape alongside the wearer's front and rear torso forming a front side and a back side. Either of the first half (14) or the second half (16) may be worn on the wearer's front or back side. The opening (28) may have a length sufficient to comfortably  
20 accommodate passage of most people's heads. The length of opening (28) may also allow shirt collars, neckties, and the like, on apparel worn underneath garment (10), to be visible. Opening (28) may further include a lining or a trim (30) for increased attractiveness, or other utility.

With reference to Figs. 1 and 3, garment (10) further includes one  
25 or more fasteners (32) for securing garment (10) around the person and, more

particularly, for attaching the first half (14) of garment (10) to the second half (16) of garment (10). Alternatively, fasteners (32) may secure one side of garment (10) to one side of a second garment (10), as illustrated by arrows (40) in Fig. 3. Each fastener (32) may comprise complementary components

5 capable of engaging with one another for secure attachment, and particularly to secure the two halves of garment (10) together. For example, fastener (32) may be a hook, a button, a Velcro® tab, a snap, a zipper, or the like, having male and female interlocking components. It will be appreciated that conventional fasteners used in the garment industry are suitable. Fastener (32) is preferably

10 of sufficient quality and configuration so as to remain fastened during normal activity, body movement, and wear, and also to be easily and conveniently unfastened for removal of garment(s) (10).

Fasteners (32) may be positioned at desired locations on panel (12). In the exemplary embodiment illustrated in Fig. 1, a plurality of fasteners

15 (32) are positioned along longitudinal edges (24) and (26) of first and second halves (14) and (16), respectively. Each edge (24) of first half (14) includes a strip (34), comprising female components of snap fasteners (32), positioned along a 36 inch portion of edge (24). Similarly, both edges (26) of second half (16) include a strip (36) of male components of the snap fasteners (32) along a

20 36 inch portion of each edge (26). Strip (34) is positioned to be in registry with strip (36) when the garment (10) is worn such that garment (10) may be worn without one of the front side and back side being uneven with the other. In another embodiment, each of strips (34) and (36) includes 24 female and male snap components, respectively, with each snap spaced 2 inches apart.



In yet another embodiment, the strips (34) and (36), are positioned about 9 inches from transverse edges (20) and (22), respectively, and extend partially between the foldline (18) and edges (20), (22). Leaving portions of longitudinal edges (24) and (26) proximate foldline (18) free from fasteners (32) creates an opening (38), when garment (10) is worn, through which the wearer's arm may conveniently extend. Fastener (32) may be a zipper, having its complimentary components positioned along edges (24) and (26), respectively, and allowing first half (14) and second half (16) to be zippered together to enclose garment (10) around the wearer's body.

Transverse edges (20) and (22) of panel (12) are generally the bottom edges of garment (10) during use. These edges may be left free and unattached. Alternatively, in yet another aspect of the present invention, these edges may include fasteners (not shown) to fasten or secure together the respective bottoms of first and second halves (14) and (16) close to the wearer's legs or feet. The fasteners (32) may be positioned so as to allow the wearer's legs a sufficient range of movement for walking, running, etc., while preventing the loss of body warmth and also protecting the wearer from foreign objects on the ground.

In another embodiment of the invention, panel (12) may include a pair of slots or openings (27) within one or both of the first half (14) and the second half (16) to allow a garment accessory (31), such as a belt, rope, tie, or other structure, to pass through for adjusting garment (10) around the wearer's body. Advantageously, opening (27) will be spaced proximate the waistline of the wearer when the garment (10) is worn. Openings (27), however, are not

limited in number, dimension, or location, and any number of openings (27) may be positioned at any location on panel (12) as desired.

Panel (12) of garment (10) may be any conventional fabric as desired and/or necessary for the intended use and/or purpose. For example, the fabric may be a polar or jersey fleece-type material made from one or more of a variety of fibers. Conventional fibers include, for example, cotton, polyester, rayon, linen, nylon, wool, silk, rubber, and the like. To this end, garment (10) may be designed and produced in any color, and may be used in any environment, setting, and context. For example, where garment (10) is to be worn by a pastor, it may be of appropriate materials, such as a light-weight, breathable cotton-polyester blend, and of appropriate color, such as black, white, or other color as selected.

Garment (10) is not limited to a single panel (12) and may further include multiple panels of fabric. For example, garment (10) may include a headpiece (not shown) independent of but configured to be positioned around and/or attached to the opening (28) in foldline (18). This headpiece may serve as a hood to protect the wearer's head during use of garment (10). In addition, pockets and the like may be included at desired locations on panel (12).

With reference to Fig. 2, garment (10) may comfortably be worn by the wearer. Garment (10) may be dimensioned such that it comfortably fits over other clothing worn by the wearer. To this end, garment's (10) dimensions may vary. For example, longitudinal edges (24) and (26) may be of length sufficient to extend below the wearer's waist, with the transverse edges (20) and (22) proximate the wearer's ankles. Longer lengths may result in edges (20) and/or (22) dragging on the ground and collecting dirt. Further, transverse

edges (20) and (22) may be of width correlating to the average male and female arm length, as illustrated in Fig. 2. For example, the particular dimensions may be chosen as needed for children and/or adults, and may depend on physical factors such as height, weight, girth, etc. of the wearer's body.

In yet another embodiment of the invention, garment (10) may be imaged or printed upon with logos, designs, stickers, decals, and the like (not shown in the Figs). More particularly, such images may be printed or embossed on the first half (14) and/or the second half (16) of garment (10) so as to be visible from the front, back, or both sides of the individual(s) wearing garment (10). For example, favorite icons or advertisements may be portrayed on the front side and/or the back side of garment (10). Conventional printing and embossing techniques, such as screen printing and computer linked image printing, may be used to image garment (12). Similarly, known imaging techniques utilized to transfer films, dyes, and other imaging materials from an image substrate onto garment (10) are suitable.

Fig. 3 illustrates an exemplary application of the invention where two separate, independent garments (10) may be attached to one another. Arrows (40) illustrate one exemplary manner of how garments (10) may be fastened together. To this end, fasteners (32), such as snaps comprising male and female components, along respective edges (24) and (26) of garments are provided to interconnect the multiple garments (10). More particularly, the female components positioned along the inner edge (24) of first half (14) of garment (10) are adapted to be fastened to the male components positioned along the inner edge (24) of first half (14) of adjacent garment (10), and the

male components positioned along the inner edge (26) of second half (16) of garment (10) are adapted to be fastened to the female components positioned along the inner edge (26) of second half (16) of adjacent garment (10). The remaining free fasteners (male and female components) on the outer edges (24) and (26) of garment (10) are fastened together, and similarly, the unfastened male and female components on the outer edges (24) and (26) of adjacent garment (10) are fastened together. Garments (10) may be accordingly attached to one another while being worn by two individual people. In this manner, two people can be "huddled" within a single enclosure of a pair of garments (10).

In another embodiment, the present invention takes the "huddled" concept a step further, and contemplates a plurality of persons, situated adjacent one another, to be "huddled-up" or "doubled-up" within a plurality of inter-fastened, or inter-connected, independent garments (10) of the present invention. Each garment (10) would be worn on an individual's shoulders and inter-connected with other garments on adjacent persons, such that a plurality of people are collectively "huddled-up" or "connected" to one another via the garments (10). With reference to Fig. 4, persons A, B, C, and D may be "huddled-up", as shown, by inter-connecting multiple garments (10) in the manner described above. For example, the female components of snap fasteners (32) along an edge (24) of first half (14) (front side) of garment (10) on person A may be "snapped" into the male components of snap fasteners (32) along an edge (26) of a second half (16) (also front side) of a second garment (10) on person B. Person B would be wearing the second garment (10) either inside out or reversed, having the second half (16) positioned in front

so as to attach to the first half (14) of garment (10) on person A. Similarly, person A's second half (16), on his/her back side, includes male snap components along an edge (26) of second half (16) that may be snapped into corresponding female snap components on person B's back side edge (24) of first half (14) of second garment (10). Person B's male snap components along an edge (24) of first half (14) may be "snapped" into corresponding female snap components on person C in a like fashion. Likewise, Person C's male snaps may be attached to person D's female snaps. Finally, the two outer most persons A and D having free, unfastened snap components may snap together his/her first and second halve (14) and (16) to complete the "huddled" enclosure. The resulting "huddled" enclosure may be in the form of a line, a circle, and the like. In this manner, a plurality of individuals may be "huddle-doubled up". Huddling-up or doubling-up may be to provide warmth, camaraderie, or simple amusement. This feature of the present invention would be fun when sitting together and watching an event, such as a ball game, the sunset, or chatting amongst friends. Accordingly, this garment is useful in social settings, whether indoor and outdoor, in any season.

Thus, there is provided garments for wear by one or more persons, and adapted to be inter-connected in multiple configurations for "doubling-up" or "huddling-up" people. The garment generally provides warmth, comfort, without a loss of mobility. The garment may further include thereon images, designs, logos, and the like, as desired, to provide aesthetically pleasing characteristics and/or commercial benefit. Further, the garment is simple to wear and simple to manufacture.

While the present invention has been illustrated by the description of various embodiments thereof, and while these embodiments have been described in considerable detail, it is not the intention of the applicant to restrict or in any way limit the scope of the appended claims to such detail. Additional  
5 advantages and modifications will readily appear to those skilled in the art. The invention in its broader aspects is therefore not limited to the specific details, representative garments, and illustrative examples shown and described.

What Is Claimed Is:

